

SHEMUS DHU, THE BLACK PEDLAR OF GALWAY.

A TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

CHAPTER XIII.—(CONTINUED)

"Hold!" said the voice, in a distinct, solemn tone. "Approach not. You are in my power. My warning is for you, and for you alone. Fear your companion—watch him—but trust him not!"

"You are waited for," said the latter, in a sharp quick voice, which savoured of displeasure, addressing the younger stranger when he made his appearance; "you are wanted too. This villain refuses to guide us further. I have a wish with your assistance to force him to it."

"No, D'Arcy," said the other, "we will have his reasons first." "Confound your tongue! I have not told you not to use names. A moment ago, and you whispered my name audible enough for that fellow to start at it."

"I have promised to guide you only to this spot; make the way out now as well as you can." He dashed the torch into a neighbouring stream, and left them in complete darkness.

"I will follow," answered his companion; "but after my own fashion, without running my nose against every tree I meet, or plunging headlong every pool in my way. The dumb—You take men's legs to be made of steel, and their faces covered with iron, not to suffer in such a run. Well, now, as you move more quietly I will put a fair question—What think you of our guide the torch bearer?"

"He is a knave," said D'Arcy. "Aye," said Frank, "you would say he is a knave or fool; but by my honour, as a poor gentleman, he is more fool than knave, or is something worse than either."

voice behind me. The hound knew him; you perceive that he has followed him."

"Your last remark gets the lie; here is Buscar before me. Shemus is well secured, he will never leave the place in which he is confined unless for a worse one."

"You thought so before," said Frank "and you were deceived. Hang me though for putting you on his trail! He was a good fellow and I hope no evil will befall him."

"He is not in my power now," said D'Arcy. "The corporation may do with him as they please, though I thank you that he is now out of my way."

"Don't thank me, D'Arcy," replied his companion coolly. "I am sorry I had part in his arrest. If worse luck happen to him by your means, you can never again call Frank O'Reilly your friend. Shemus served my father faithfully, and often gave me good counsel. Through I be driven from my father's home—all for your sake—I am not yet fallen so low as to want gratitude."

"Your next change of feeling, will lead you to put on a surplice, and give us a lecture against drinking and swearing," said D'Arcy, sarcastically. "By—," it will not, D'Arcy, said Frank O'Reilly. "My feelings and my habits are a man's, and I am not ashamed of them, though you may scoff. Continue to dare me to it, and you will see I have the feelings and action of a man."

"Cease your folly," said D'Arcy, "or I must treat you as a school boy—we are just at the hermit's—remember, silence and caution."

"I will keep my word, because I have pledged it," said O'Reilly, with an effort to subdue his anger, and then he resolved it should be the last time he would serve so heartless a friend. The resolution had been often made, and of tractability of character, to which habit and love of pleasure gave strength, had as often broken it. D'Arcy chuckled inwardly at the thought that O'Reilly and every person else believed that to be an enemy of Shemus Dhu.

voice, at the same time moving to the farther part of the room to avoid the hearing of his companion, and beckoning to the hermit to follow.

"It is not many years since I heard bold words of passion from beneath that garb. You and I have met before this."

"Hold!" said the old man, in a tremulous voice, raising his hand to his forehead, and suddenly withdrawing it.

"Good God! can it be you again? Yes, it is he—it is O'Grady!" "Reginald O'Grady—to you, O'Halloran—to the world, D'Arcy," said D'Arcy, throwing off his disguise, and discovering the same features and dress with which we have described him in the meeting with Judith Egan.

"Did you not promise, O'Grady," said the hermit, with his first mild voice, "never again to disturb my peace? It was—"

"Oh, there was a necessity for it," said D'Arcy, carelessly. "I could not help it. You will be satisfied by-and-by."

"And to bring a witness—an accomplice, perhaps!" "Fear not him; he is an honest, good for nothing fellow. He is too much bound to me to carry tales, even if he knew my purpose. You know our secrets will not bear a third breast. I see the fellow is restless. You know I am not of your acquaintance."

Then the deceiver, coming forward, spoke in an audible voice: "Father, this is my good companion, Frank O'Reilly by name—a young gentleman of fair promise."

to the wall on which was raised a rough, but expressive image of the Saviour in His last agony. This circumstance in connection with the sentiments of the hermit in the outer room, gave him uneasiness.

"What art thou really changed?" said D'Arcy, endeavouring by his bantering tone to preserve an appearance of indifference, despite the uneasiness evident in his countenance. "Come, tell us for what self-purpose, that we may gain advantage by the lesson."

"Reginald," said the hermit, solemnly, "the change was from the hand of the Most High." "By the faith I have to pledge, this is the better jest, always in extremes! It is a shorter leap than I imagined from impiety to canting."

"A deep blush suffused the countenance of the hermit at the insinuation. It passed like lightning, and he arose with a calm dignity." "Young man," he said, if you mean by impiety, irreligion, I have never been impious. I have always believed that God existed, though I felt it not as I should. It is true, I have committed deeds of the darkest passions; but I hope by some atonement to the offended majesty of God, to receive pardon from Him, and yet have peace. Ah, Reginald, if you have tasted to the full, as I have the bitter after-fruit of indulged passion, you too might be changed. If you had felt the miseries and wants that distracted this forlorn, wretched heart, though it had in enjoyment all the objects of its strongest desires; or if you could experience the anguish of my despair! Oh, what I felt and suffered in my abandonment of all comfort from my fellow-creatures, during the long nights of my vigils of torture; if you could know the tortures I endured when I looked back to the blackness of my guilt in the sight of God—oh! there would then be a hope for your conversion. My son—I will call you yet by the strongest name of endearment I can give—my son, your change has been for many years the subject of my constant prayer to the throne of mercy. I had taught you to seek happiness in the indulgence of your passions; I have fostered these seeds of vice in you—they have borne fruit, to my misery a hundredfold. Oh, would to God I could recall the sentiments I have uttered to you! Yet there is hope—even a strong—in the mercy of the Deity."

"I can come to speak to you," he said, coldly, "on another subject. It may help you to a sterner mood."

"Unfeeling man, are you then hardened in your iniquity?" "Not quite," said D'Arcy; "when the fit takes I can feel; for instance, I can feel the death of a murdered father!"

"O God!" exclaimed the hermit. "Hold! I rejoice now that you have come to me. Come hither," he continued, taking hold of D'Arcy's arm, and withdrawing a shutter from a small window which gave the only light to the cell. The aperture was large enough to give an extensive view of the heavens. A thousand stars met their gaze, wasting their chastened brightness upon a senseless world. They seemed to the hermit's vision to burn brighter, as if conscious of his thoughts.

"There is no necessity for this parade," said D'Arcy, retiring. "Too well I know that his blood is on my hands. It is some consolation to me to doubt that he was my father. There is no proof of it. The world, you know, believes me to be the son of D'Arcy; yet even a doubt on this point requires a certain revenge. Tell me—you must tell me—who was my father's accomplice? It was he who struck the death-blow."

my daughter! Give her to me! Tell me where she is; you shall have all!"

"Do you promise this and swear it?" "Stop!" The contending feelings of the hermit's heart, between justice and affection were visible in his agitated countenance. His eyes sparkled, his whole frame shook, and he burst out: "Begone tempter! You would make me commit another crime. You speak a falsehood."

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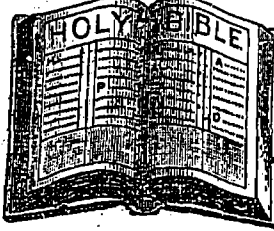
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